

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00

SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SAM-01 SAJ-01 IO-11 /075 W

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FM USLO PEKING

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5188

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 304

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CH, US

SUBJECT: PRC VISIT OF FORMER PRESIDENT RICHARD NIXON

1. VISIT TO PRC BY FORMER PRESIDENT NIXON TO THE PRC HAS PROCEEDED ALONG EXPECTED LINES. MR. AND MRS. NIXON AND THE REST OF THEIR PARTY WERE MET AT THE AIRPORT THE EVENING OF FEBRUARY 21 BY ACTING PREMIER HUA KUO-FENG, AN NPC STANDING COMMITTEE MEMBER YAO LIEN-WEI, THE PRC MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND HEALTH, OTHER OFFICIALS AND 350 REPRESENTATIVES FROM PEKING. ON FEBRUARY 22, THE NIXONS MET CHOU EN-LAI'S WIDOW TENG YING-CHIAO IN THE MORNING, MR. NIXON HAD A SUBSTANTIVE MEETING WITH ACTING PREMIER HUA AND HIS ADVISERS IN THE AFTERNOON, AND THE WELCOME BANQUET WAS HELD THAT EVENING. THE NIXONS HAD AN AUDIENCE WITH CHAIRMAN MAO FOR ONE AND ONE-HALF HOURS AT NOON FEBRUARY 23.

2. THE EVENTS HAVE BEEN CAREFULLY HANDLED TO DEMONSTRATE A WARM WELCOME FOR THE FORMER PRESIDENT, BUT THE PROTOCOL HAS BEEN KEPT A NOTCH BELOW THAT GIVEN TO PRESIDENT FORD LAST DECEMBER IN ORDER TO AVOID OFFENDING THE USG. THE NUMBER OF HIGH-LEVEL GREETERS IS FEWER
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AND ALTHOUGH NCNA REPORTED MORE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MASSES, THE

AIRPORT ARRIVAL WAS LOW KEY AND DID NOT INCLUDE FORMAL CEREMONIES. EVEN THE LENGTH OF THE MEETING WITH CHAIRMAN MAO WAS HALFWAY BETWEEN THE HOUR MR. NIXON HAD IN 1972 AND THE TWO HOUR SESSION BETWEEN THE CHAIRMAN AND PRESIDENT FORD IN DECEMBER. NCNA AGAIN DESCRIBED THE CONVERSATION AS "FRIENDLY" AND "ON A WIDE RANGE OF SUBJECTS", BUT ADDED THE STATEMENT THAT THE CHAIRMAN "ASKED MR. NIXON TO CONVEY HIS REGARDS TO PRESIDENT GERALD R. FORD UPON RETURNING HOME."

3. PARTICIPATION BY USLO IN THE VISIT HAS BEEN CONSONANT WITH CHINESE HANDLING OF VISIT. ACTING CHIEF, ALONG WITH ECONOMIC COUNSELOR AND WIFE, MET NIXONS AT AIRPORT ON ARRIVAL. ACTING CHIEF AND THREE COUNSELORS WITH THEIR WIVES ATTENDED WELCOMING BANQUET AND WILL GO TO CULTURAL PERFORMANCE EVENING OF FEBRUARY 23. USLO REPRESENTATIVES WERE NOT AT HEAD TABLE DURING BANQUET (MR. AND MRS. NIXON WERE THE ONLY AMERICANS AT THE HEAD TABLE) AND HAVE NOT PARTICIPATED IN SUBSTANTIVE CONVERSATIONS.

4. IN HIS FEBRUARY 22 BANQUET SPEECH ACTING PREMIER HUA
1) PRAISED THE FORMER PRESIDENT'S "FARSIGHTEDNESS" IN ESTABLISHING CONTACTS BETWEEN THE PRC AND THE UNITED STATES; 2) ESSENTIALLY REAFFIRMED FOREIGN POLICY POINTS MADE IN PRC TOASTS DURING PRESIDENT FORD'S VISIT AND 3) SUGGESTED THAT (CONTRARY TO MUCH OTHER PRC MEDIA COMMENT) THE PRC'S INTERNAL "REVOLUTIONARY MASS DEBATE" WILL BE LIMITED TO THE EDUCATION AND SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY SPHERES.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: VISITS, POLITICAL LEADERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976PEKING00304
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760066-1128
From: PEKING
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760223/aaaaatvi.tel
Line Count: 89
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 MAY 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <31 AUG 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRC VISIT OF FORMER PRESIDENT RICHARD NIXON
TAGS: PFOR, CH, US, (NIXON, RICHARD M)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006